



O U R C s

Captain's Meeting Minutes

7pm, Tuesday 10th week Trinity Term 2021

29th June 2021

Chair: Martin Barakso (OUBC President)

1. Register and Welcome

Attendance:

College Clubs: 93 (65 voting)

Squads: 9

OURCs Committee: 11

Senior Umpires: 1

Total Voting Body: 86

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

- Available at: <https://ourcs.co.uk/organisation/meetings/>

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

4. Rowing Sabbatical Officer Election – Beth Carter to speak

- James Lucas (Linacre)
Proposed: Liam Brown (Linacre)
Seconded: Elisa Martin Perez (Linacre)
- Thomas SurrIDGE (Mansfield/St Catherine's)
Proposed: Rowan Burford (Mansfield)
Seconded: Eva Hassan (Mansfield)

Voting:

James Lucas - **47 Votes**

Thomas SurrIDGE: **27 Votes**

Abstention: **3 Votes**

James wins and will be the Rowing Sabbatical Officer for the 2021-22 academic year.

5. OURCs Committee Elections – Beth Carter to speak

- Secretary
Ty Rallens (Merton)
Proposed: Ilayda Karadag (St Catherine's)
Seconded: Yüran Shi (St Anthony')

Voting:

Tyson Rallens - **61 Votes**
Against (RON) - **8 Votes**
Abstention - **3 Votes**

Tyson wins and is the new OURCs Secretary.

- Captain of Coxes
Evan Roberts (Kellogg/Christ Church)
Proposed: Anna James-Bott (St Hilda's)
Seconded: Abigail Whalen (Magdalen)

Mifforcombi Mifsud (Worcester)

Proposed: Jess Wallis (Worcester)
Seconded: Robert Anderson (Worcester)

Ruby Sioux Harrison (Green Templeton)

Proposed: James Marsden (Wolfson)
Seconded: Jiaxin Zhao (Green Templeton)

Voting (Round 1):

Evan Roberts - **18 Votes**
Mifforcombi Mifsud - **20 Votes**
Ruby Sioux Harrison - **32 Votes**
Abstention - **0 Votes**

No single candidate has more than 50% of the votes. Those eligible were asked to cast their votes again and Evan was removed from the next round of voting as they had the fewest number of votes.

Voting (Round 2):

Mifforcombi Mifsud - **21 Votes**
Ruby Sioux Harrison - **48 Votes**
Abstention - **0 Votes**

Ruby wins and is the new OURCs Captain of Coxes.

- Treasurer
No applicants.

6. Amendments to the Constitution - Viv Leong to speak
Two thirds majority to pass

1) Change:

1.4.f. College Boat Clubs automatically cease to be affiliated on the 1st October if, in the previous year:

- i. they have not entered any OURCs events,
- ii. they have not paid British Rowing affiliation fees, or
- iii. they have not submitted a British Rowing Safety Audit.

to

(additions shown in red)

1.4.f. College Boat Clubs automatically cease to be affiliated on the 1st October if, in the previous year:

- i. they have not entered any OURCs events,
- ii. they have not paid British Rowing affiliation fees, or
- iii. they have not submitted a British Rowing Safety Audit.

g. Exceptions to 1.4.f., in cases of bona fide financial or otherwise hardship, may be agreed prior to that date with the OURCs senior member or senior treasurer.

2) Change:

1.5.g. All College Boat Clubs are required to pay an affiliation fee to OURCs, which will be used solely to fund the OURCs Sabbatical Officer. College Boat Club affiliations will be based on the number of boats competing in the most recent Eights competition where at least one full day of racing was completed (excluding boats that fail to row on). The fee per crew must be confirmed in the first Captains' Meeting in Michaelmas Term.

to

(amendments shown in red)

1.5.g. All College Boat Clubs are required to pay an affiliation fee to OURCs, which will be used solely to fund the OURCs Sabbatical Officer. College Boat Club affiliations will be based on the number of boats competing in the most recent **Bumps** competition where at least one full day of racing was completed (excluding boats that fail to row on). The fee per crew must be confirmed in the first Captains' Meeting in Michaelmas Term.

Proposed: Vivian Leong (St Hugh's/OURCs)

Seconded: Beth Carter (OURCs)

One of the Senior Umpires stated that as they understand it, this motion only went out in the updated version of the agenda and not in the original version distributed 48 hours before the meeting. They stated that they completely understood why the motion was being proposed and they think that it is a good motion, but that constitutional amendments should be circulated 48 hours before the meeting as otherwise the door can be opened to those who wish to exploit this and submit new motions with no time for captains to consider them. Therefore, the Senior Umpire suggested that the motion should be voted on at a later date with proper notice, otherwise it could be setting a precedent which other people could exploit. JW responded that according to the rules constitutional amendments just have to be circulated before the meeting, it does not state that this has to be in the agenda distributed 48 hours before the meeting. They stated that there have been revised agendas in the past so there is already some precedent therefore it is valid to vote on this motion, though this loophole could be closed in future if the captains/committee wish to do so. TR asked the chair if he would be open to a motion from the floor to ask whether the captains would like

to vote on this constitutional amendment at this meeting. The chair accepted this, and the motion was seconded by WJ.

Motion to ask whether the Captains would like to vote on the proposed constitutional amendments at this meeting.

Simple majority to pass

Proposed: Tyson Rallens (Merton/OURCs)

Seconded: William Jones (LMH)

Voting:

In Favour - **31 Votes**

Against - **24 Votes**

Abstention - **6 Votes**

Item 6 will be voted on at this meeting.

Captains were asked how they vote on proposed change (1) to the constitution.

Vote For - **55 Votes**

Vote Against - **4 Votes**

Abstention - **3 Votes**

Motion passes.

Captains were asked how they vote on proposed change (2) to the constitution.

Vote For - **45 Votes**

Vote Against - **4 Votes**

Abstention - **10 Votes**

Motion passes.

7. Change to Rules of Racing – Becky Hore and Jamie Atkinson to speak
2/3 majority to pass

Motion to amend the Rules of Racing to allow Fellowship Members to transfer under the same rules as Student Members

Under certain circumstances, student boat club members are permitted to transfer between college boat clubs: for instance, a student undertaking a master's degree may continue competing with their undergraduate college.

This allows students with deep ties to a college to continue training and racing with their friends and coaches with whom they may have learned to row. These transfer provisions do not currently extend to Fellowship Members.

We believe that there is no substantial difference between someone undertaking a Junior Research Fellowship after a DPhil, and someone undertaking a master's degree after an undergraduate degree. In both circumstances they are likely to have formed connections they may wish to maintain.

We therefore propose the following changes to the Rules of Racing, A1.2.a., A1.2.b., and A1.2.c.:

1. Replace references to 'bona fide student or visiting student' with 'bona fide student, visiting student, or fellow eligible under A1.1.a.ii.1')
2. Replace references to 'student member' with 'student member or fellowship member'
3. Replace references to 'student status' with 'student or fellowship status'
4. Replace references to 'course of study' with 'course of study or fellowship'
5. Add hyperlinks to the definition of Fellowship Member (A1.1.a.ii.1), as required
6. Any other minor changes, as necessary, to implement the intent of this motion

This motion does not change any requirements of transfer: transfers would still require the written permission of the relevant boat club captains, as well as relevant proof of academic status.

Proposed: Becky Hore (Somerville)

Seconded: Jamie Atkinson (Somerville)

There were no questions at this time.

Voting:

Vote For - **43 Votes**

Vote Against - **10 Votes**

Abstention - **4 Votes**

Motion passes.

8. Discussion Points - Alison Carrington and Anna Betteridge to speak

We would like to discuss the following points;

- Granting SUs the power to consider evidence and not just the application of the rules of racing
- Granting SUs the power to consider appeals against race committee decisions, not just complaints against other crews
- Increasing the appeals window for escalation of matters regarding race committee decisions to the SUs, with the exception of sandwich boats which need to be resolved in a time sensitive manner

Proposed: Alison Carrington (Hertford)

Seconded: Anna Betteridge (Christ Church)

AC stated that herself and AB were proposing this discussion point as they believe that the current process of appealing to the Senior Umpires after racing has finished encourages a blame culture. Currently crews can only appeal if they are requesting that a penalty be enforced on another crew, therefore they cannot necessarily appeal a race committee decision directly when another crew was not at fault. They believe that the points they have raised could be productive suggestions and may serve to make the appeals process more transparent and easier for all involved. In the modern age it can be hard to put together coherent appeals within a 10-minute window when you may have video/audio evidence which takes some time to upload. This rule may also unfairly disadvantage some clubs who are situated further away from racedesk as they have to quickly make their way over and submit evidence within the appeals window.

TR asked whether AB and AC were planning on raising this motion themselves in the future or whether they are aiming to kick off a conversation with other people first. AC responded that they would like other captains to get in touch with them to work collaboratively on these suggestions and rule changes to best represent the improvements that benefit the most clubs. TR also expressed that he would be happy to lend his support to this, and also suggested that it could be beneficial to reach out to alumni networks as they may have some useful suggestions and input.

One of the Senior Umpires stated that the aim of this discussion is a really good one and it would've been even better to have in person if it was safe to do so. The SU asked if this was

something that would also be implemented for every day of racing or would it just be for the last day - could someone launch an appeal in the week after racing about something which happened on one of the earlier days and if so, how would this impact the results as they stand on subsequent days? AC responded that this is exactly why they opened this up for discussion as they did not have much time to put the motion together, so it is incredibly useful when aspects like this are pointed out. This aspect needs some more thought and if anyone has any suggestions, they would be more than welcome. AC did state that in a normal year crews are re-inserted into the start/finishing order all the time (i.e. when they have not entered in a particular year) without much thought on the impact of this on the crews around them and so with more thought a work around should be feasible. AC also suggested that the window could last for half a day or until the end of racing rather than being indefinite. AB stated that in her case she feels most strongly about the 10-minute window aspect of this proposal - as 10 minutes really is not enough time to collate all necessary evidence in some cases, and as a captain she felt as though a number of her crews struggled with this when launching/being involved in appeals. The SU stated that usually if within the 10-minute window a captain can get in touch with racedesk to state that they want to launch an appeal, they should be then allowed enough time to make it around to racedesk to give evidence and such (even if this is not necessarily within 10 minutes). AC suggested that this should be codified to make sure that it is standard practice going forward as aspects like this can easily be forgotten following a long break from competition as has been the case over the last couple of years.

A captain asked why the original motion proposed by AC and AB was removed from the agenda. AC stated that they opted to remove this motion because they wanted to ensure that everything was constitutionally by the book. They wanted to make it clear that their motion was not personal and so they removed it after speaking about the matter with a number of different people. AB added that the motion they introduced was not necessarily constitutionally viable and the Captains may have wanted more time to consider evidence and such. Both AC and AB wanted this to be as impersonal as possible which is why they brought the discussion points forward instead.

Another captain suggested that the suitability of a 10-minute appeals window may also be dependent upon the way in which evidence is submitted, as writing a coherent email within the time frame may be more difficult than a face-to-face discussion about the event (as would usually be the case in a normal year).

A captain then asked about the point regarding giving evidence from race committee decisions to the SUs and not just the application of the Rules of Racing, they wondered how this would work in practice. AC stated that the evidence which the Race Committee had access to would also be shown to the SUs and would allow crews to appeal the actual committee decision rather than just launch a complaint about the actions of another crew, as it is essential that they have access to the same evidence as the Race Committee. JW clarified that when an appeal is escalated to the SUs they do have access to the same evidence as the Race Committee and they also get to see the reasoning behind the decisions made. The SUs then look at whether this was valid in terms of the rules. JW also clarified that when decisions of appeals are communicated, they make sure that those involved have received them and are aware of the outcome before the escalation window begins, they wanted to clear that up as there may be some misunderstanding surrounding how the process works.

A captain expressed some thoughts about the idea of appealing against race desk decisions. They suggested that putting something in writing which could act as a guideline detailing what sort of actions/rule breaches could result in a given number of penalty bumps may be useful for captains as they could then understand better why a particular number of penalties had been applied, and they would be aware of this before racing even begins. The captain also acknowledged that discretion is needed in a lot of cases, but something in the rules going forward could be useful. JW said that this was also discussed by some of the OURCs committee earlier in the day, the main issue is that every situation is different and sometimes the exact same action/mistake can have very different consequences, and different levels of competence are expected in different divisions. It is also worth noting that sometimes penalties can differ based on how aware of the river individuals are expected to be (i.e. if the cox is injured they may be understandably less aware). As a result of this it is hard to come up with an appropriate penalty bump 'menu' of 'X action = Y penalty'. Another suggestion was to publicise the precedent and reasoning for decisions, JW stated that this is something which could be done to the captains involved directly in the appeals though in terms of respecting the privacy and confidence of those involved perhaps would not be good to do publicly. JW also noted that during racing the Event Committee is under a lot of time pressure and so writing up detailed reports may not be feasible, though shorter explanations could be good. A captain then asked whether there should be a cap set for the maximum number of penalty bumps which can be given to avoid the number increasing each year. JW stated that it could be good to think of what a theoretical maximum could be, though 4 penalty bumps have been given to crews in the past as it was in the rules (crews could previously be given 4 penalty bumps for boating under red flag conditions) so this was not a new concept, though they are not aware of more than 4 being given out at once.

TR then stated that not every good idea has to be in the rules, if people have suggestions they would be more than happy to discuss ways to put them into practice to make progress. One suggestion on this front was implementing more training for race committees (who are usually student volunteers) to ensure that the rules and penalties are applied as consistently as possible. TR also made it clear that race committee members do not have to be members of the OURCs committee, they can also be race desk helpers and alumni so anyone is welcome to get involved if they wish to.

Another suggestion to increase confidence in Race Committee decisions was to allow the discussions to be observed/made in front of those involved to ensure that the process is fair. JW responded that some level of adjustment could be useful in this regard but having those involved in the event present would not be productive. Emotions tend to run high around some of these decisions and it may be intimidating for members of the Race Committee as sometimes individuals can respond aggressively, thereby making it harder to actually put together a committee willing to take on these decisions.

AC and AB stated that if anyone is interested in contributing to these discussions, they should get in touch (alison.carrington@hertford.ox.ac.uk) so that they can get the ball rolling on some proposals.

9. Ratification of Major Transgression Meetings – Thomas Surridge to speak

- St Catherine's - £40
- University - £40

No objections. Ratified.

10. AOB